

# FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

## POLICY AND PROCEDURE



**Policy Number:**  
261-18

**Effective Date:**  
11/11/2016

**Subject:**  
Inspection of Vehicle Identification Numbers

**Approved by:**  
  
**Steven D. Hebbe, Chief of Police**



### **PURPOSE:**

To provide written guidelines for the Vehicle Identification Number Inspection program.

### **POLICY:**

It is the policy of the Farmington Police Department to administer a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) Inspection Program as a service to the public in order to facilitate the registering and licensing of a citizen's vehicle through law enforcement verification of the authenticity of the vehicle's identification number(s).

### **PROCEDURE:**

#### **Definition:**

**Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)-** A unique code including a serial number, used by the automotive industry to identify individual motor vehicles, towed vehicles, motorcycles and mopeds (as defined in ISO 3833) and any critical parts or essential components thereof. Only officers who are currently certified as VIN Inspectors by the New Mexico State Police may participate in the VIN Inspection Program.

#### **Records Responsibilities:**

Citizens will be required to pay an established fee and sign up through the Farmington Police Department Records Division to have their vehicles inspected.

Records Personnel will provide the first available appointment time to the citizen in accordance with Department procedures.

Payment will only be in the form of cash, money order, or credit card. After a fee has been paid,

Records will provide the citizen with a receipt which shall be provided to the inspecting officer prior to any inspection taking place.

As part of the payment and receipt process, the citizen is provided a printed brochure which contains important information including that the service for which the citizen is voluntarily requesting the assistance of the Department, the Department, the City, and their employees, will not be responsible for damages, or alleged damages, incurred as a result of the inspection process associated with driving, parking, lifting, entering, or inspecting a vehicle, including minor cosmetic damages to paint or other vehicle surfaces, including the undercarriage or any coating on any surface of the vehicle, and including any component or accessory of the vehicle's passenger compartment and interior, except where those damages were incurred through gross negligence. Owners of vehicles are also notified that they are responsible for removing items of value from their vehicle prior to the inspection process.

The schedule of citizens requesting a VIN Inspection will be maintained by the Records Division and provided to the inspecting officers.

### **Scheduling:**

A list of officers scheduled to conduct inspections on designated dates will be maintained by the Shift Two Lieutenant or his designee. The number of officers scheduled, the time allotted to perform each inspection, and the number of inspections to be performed will determine the length of the assignment. The assignment is concluded when the last inspection is complete.

Officers shall not be permitted to conduct inspections without first confirming payment has been received, unless directed by a supervisor.

Inspections will be scheduled in chronological order, beginning at 0800 hours, and ending with the last scheduled appointment, or at 1800 hours. Inspections are generally scheduled for the third Friday of each month. If no appointments are scheduled on any given date or time, the assignment is cancelled or concluded.

Officers will be scheduled to work in pairs in order to facilitate an accurate and timely inspection process.

Inspections will be scheduled in chronological order, and cannot be manipulated to extend an assignment or work day. Citizens will be given an appointment window to allow for an appropriate amount of time to complete each inspection.

Inspections will be conducted in accordance with accepted inspection practices, as trained by the New Mexico State Police. Inspections will be conducted at the McCormick Sub Station, or any other area approved by the Operations Captain. Appropriate inspection tools will be provided by the Department and maintained by the program coordinator at the substation. All vehicles will be checked through the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) prior to signing the VIN Affidavit.

If an administrative issue regarding the inspection arises wherein an inspection cannot be completed, the owner will be referred to the New Mexico State Police office to complete the inspection. In addition, the owner of the inspected vehicle will be referred to the Records Division for the processing of a refund of the inspection fee and the inspecting officer will authorize the refund on the owner's receipt. Refunds will be in accordance with city policy, or as directed by the Operations Captain. In as much as the Department must staff the inspection process according to the scheduled appointments, no refunds may be issued for missed appointments.

If, during the inspection process, contraband or evidence of a crime is discovered, or cause is shown to question the lawful status of the vehicle, an on-duty law enforcement officer will be summoned to the scene for the investigation and documentation of the event and the disposition of any contraband or the vehicle.

### **Safety Procedures:**

Officers shall ensure proper safety procedures are followed during all VIN Inspections, including maintaining the work area free of clutter, tools, and equipment.

Owners of vehicles being inspected are prohibited from entering or remaining in the work area during the inspection process.

Officers shall utilize hydraulic floor jacks *and* jack stands *and* wheel chocks when accessing VIN numbers on the undercarriage of vehicles. Whenever an officer is conducting an inspection of a vehicle's undercarriage, a second officer must be present in the immediate area.

Prior to the commencement of inspection activities, inspecting officers shall verify that the hydraulic jack, jack stands, and wheel chocks are in good working condition according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

Hydraulic jacks and jack stands will be utilized in locations on the vehicle being inspected in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's recommendation where such information is readily apparent or available.

Officers will be required to wear eye protection and gloves, as needed, during the inspection process. Whenever an officer is conducting an inspection of a vehicle's undercarriage, eye protection shall be worn at all times during the undercarriage inspection.

If a required piece of safety equipment is not available at the time of the inspection, the inspecting officer shall immediately notify the VIN Inspection Coordinator to acquire the needed items, or make additional arrangements for the inspection.

VIN Inspectors shall take personal responsibility for ensuring their personal safety and that the inspection process is adhering to all safety procedures.